



CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

AGENDA DATE: April 19, 2011
TO: Mayor and Councilmembers
FROM: Planning Division, Community Development Department
SUBJECT: *Plan Santa Barbara* Ad Hoc Subcommittee Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION: That Council:

- A. Receive Subcommittee recommendations to date;
- B. Hold discussion to determine full Council positions on Subcommittee recommendations; and
- C. Provide direction to Subcommittee and staff on next steps.

DISCUSSION:

Process to Date

On March 1, 2011, the Council directed the *Plan Santa Barbara (PlanSB)* Ad Hoc Subcommittee to further explore key issues and work towards agreements that could be supported by the full Council or a five-vote majority in order to adopt the *PlanSB* General Plan Update. A goal of three months for completing the Subcommittee's review was expressed, as well as check-ins with the full Council.

The Council also enumerated a number of issues for the Subcommittee to address including: density, unit size & overlay locations; floor-to-area ratio (FAR), building size, bulk & scale; circulation & parking; air quality highway setbacks; adaptive management; noise; non-residential growth limitations; and second units. At the Subcommittee's subsequent meeting, an overall approach and set of topics was set.

The Subcommittee has now concluded its first three meetings and this report serves to summarize the recommendations to date. In addition, staff offers the following observations. For a number of the issues, all three of the Subcommittee members have been able to agree on recommendations resulting in relatively minor policy shifts. The primary areas of continuing disagreement have been the proposed increased workforce housing density incentive, parking requirements and an air quality highway setback. Staff believes that once these issues have been resolved, the other topics may be addressed in relatively short-order.

Areas of Agreement

The issues for which the Subcommittee found agreement in the Land Use Element included: removing the Brinkerhoff and Bungalow districts from the higher density overlay areas, removing references to Form Based Coding, expanding the Floor Area Ratio working group membership, and general agreement with the Adaptive Management Program policy and implementation measures.

In the Historic Resources Element, agreement included a reference to historic preservation in the Land Use Element goals, removal of references to Form Based Codes, an explicit statement as to the intent of the element, an expansion of the Historic Landmarks Committee subcommittee membership to include members of the preservation community, and the removal on the six month Interim Preservation Guideline implementation action.

In the Circulation Element, there was general agreement on the goals and policies, with the exception of parking standards which are discussed below.

Residential Densities, Parking Standards & Air Quality Highway Setback

The Subcommittee has discussed residential densities at some length with limited agreements. There is general agreement on the value of converting the existing Variable Density incentive program to the Average Unit Density (AUD) in order to address building size, bulk and scale issues. The Subcommittee also agrees that an overlay density increase should be done in selected locations, on a temporary basis, to test the effectiveness of the policy. The fundamental disagreement seems to center on whether the AUD program should have two tiers: Medium-High 15-25 dwelling units per acre (du/ac) and High density 25-45 du/ac.

The intent of the AUD program is to encourage smaller building as a trade-off for higher densities, which in turn can encourage more affordable workforce housing. The AUD program provides for a range of densities, based on the average unit size, to provide a developer with the ability to design a range of unit types and sizes. However, a key point to remember is that the size of the building remains the same, no matter which density the developer chooses within either the Medium-High or High designations in the AUD program.

The intent of the High density designation is to provide a significant incentive to focus future workforce housing within walking distance to transit and commercial services. If the AUD program is restricted to only Medium-High densities, all multi-unit projects using this incentive would in effect result in smaller buildings without the trade-off or benefit of higher densities.

Councilmen Francisco and Hotchkiss are generally not supportive of higher densities, but may be open to two-tiers. Councilman Francisco has proposed higher density as an experiment over a five year period, together with monitoring and assessment of the results of the policy. Most recently, he has proposed that the higher densities be achieved through a 50% overlay on the Medium-High density for market units, and a 100% overlay on the Medium-High density for rental and employer housing.

Councilman White is concerned that after the high density overlays expire in five years, all of the multi-unit designations would default to 15-25 du/ac within smaller buildings as required under the proposed AUD program. The implication being, a significant disincentive to build residential units, particularly in the commercial districts with higher land costs.

As an alternative, Councilman White has proposed that the High Density dwelling units per acre be pushed downwards from 27-45 du/ac to perhaps 27-37 du/ac. Thus, for an average High Density project with 845 sq. ft. units the density would be 32 du/ac, and with the 50% overlay for rental/employer housing the density would be 48 du/ac. As a second alternative, Councilman White has proposed the five year experiment include the AUD program, which at the end of the five year period would revert back to the current Variable Density program (15-27 du/ac) and no unit size standards.

The number of units that would be permitted during the experiment is also an unresolved issue. Councilman Francisco has proposed 100 units over a five year period, and Councilman White has recommended about 250 units. Between 1990 and 2007, a total of 2,717 units were constructed of which approximately 1,721 units, or 100 units a year, were built under the variable density standard that the proposed AUD program is intended to replace.

Staff recommends that the number selected be at least 50% of the historic trend, at 50 units per year or 250 units over the proposed five year period. Staff's position is that an average of 20 units per year over five years will not yield a sufficient number of projects from which to assess the success or failure of the policy.

Staff prefers a simpler ordinance with a time limit only, however an ordinance could be drafted that includes a number of unit limitation. It will be important to decide how the limit is applied and most likely this will be applied at the beginning of the process. This program has been described as an incentive and as such, with a significant limitation on the number of units, there is a concern that potential applicants will not be interested given the heightened risk and uncertainty in the process.

The issue of residential parking requirements for multi-unit projects was also unresolved. Councilman Hotchkiss recommends two spaces per unit based on the belief that every working family will need two cars. Councilman Francisco recommends that the required number of parking spaces be best left to the market. Councilman White proposes that the existing requirement of one parking space per unit for mixed use projects in the downtown be extended to all multi-unit projects. The Subcommittee all agreed that parking maximums should not be considered at this time.

The last area where the Subcommittee did not reach consensus was the air quality setback from Highway 101. The Air Resources Board recommends a 500 foot setback for all new residential construction, based on state wide data. A local study, conducted through the *PlanSB* Environmental Impact Report, recommends 250', which was also recommended by the Planning Commission. Councilman Hotchkiss recommends 250'; Councilman Francisco recommends no buffer; and Councilman White needs to further study the issue.

The two attached maps graphically illustrate the different recommendations for residential densities and air quality highway setbacks. Option 3 illustrates the AUD at Medium-High only and proposes two overlays (within the same overlay boundary): 50% for market units and 100% for Rental & Employer projects, and no air quality setback. Option 4 reflects both Medium-High and High density designations, with a bigger overlay applicable to Rental & Employer projects only, and a 250' air quality setback.

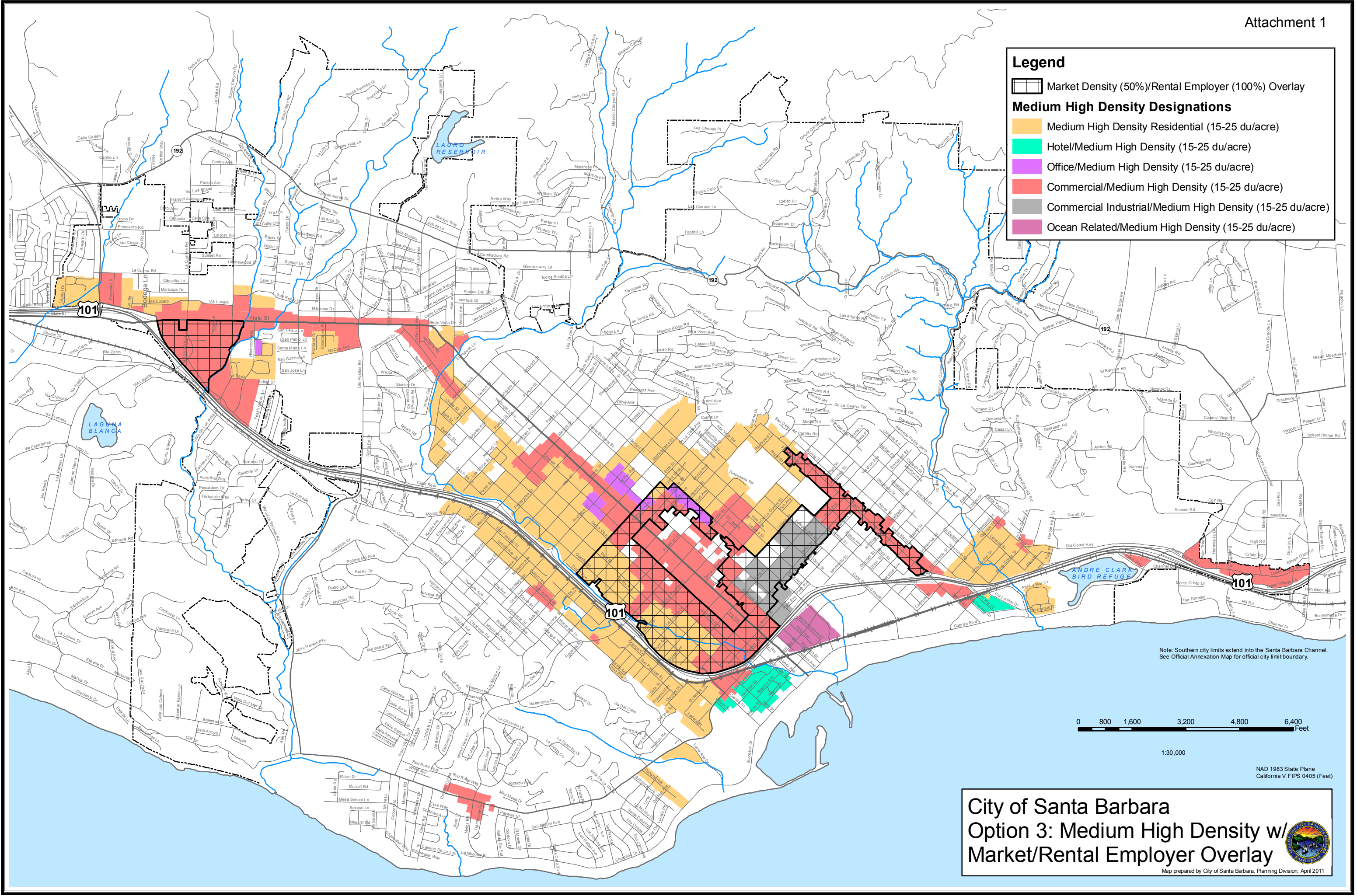
The Subcommittee's recommendations to date include the results from three meetings, March 11, March 25 and April 8, and are summarized by topic in Attachment 3. Staff recommends that the full Council discuss and resolve these density, parking and air quality setback issues prior to the resumption of the Ad Hoc Subcommittee meetings.

ATTACHMENTS: 1. Option 3 Map
 2. Option 4 Map
 3. Ad Hoc Subcommittee Recommendations, April 19, 2011

PREPARED BY: John Ledbetter, Principal Planner

SUBMITTED BY: Paul Casey, Assistant City Administrator/Community
 Development Director

APPROVED BY: City Administrator's Office



Legend

Market Density (50%)/Rental Employer (100%) Overlay

Medium High Density Designations

Medium High Density Residential (15-25 du/acre)

Hotel/Medium High Density (15-25 du/acre)

Office/Medium High Density (15-25 du/acre)

Commercial/Medium High Density (15-25 du/acre)

Commercial Industrial/Medium High Density (15-25 du/acre)

Ocean Related/Medium High Density (15-25 du/acre)

Note: Southern city limits extend into the Santa Barbara Channel.
See Official Annexation Map for official city limit boundary.

0 800 1,600 3,200 4,800 6,400
Feet

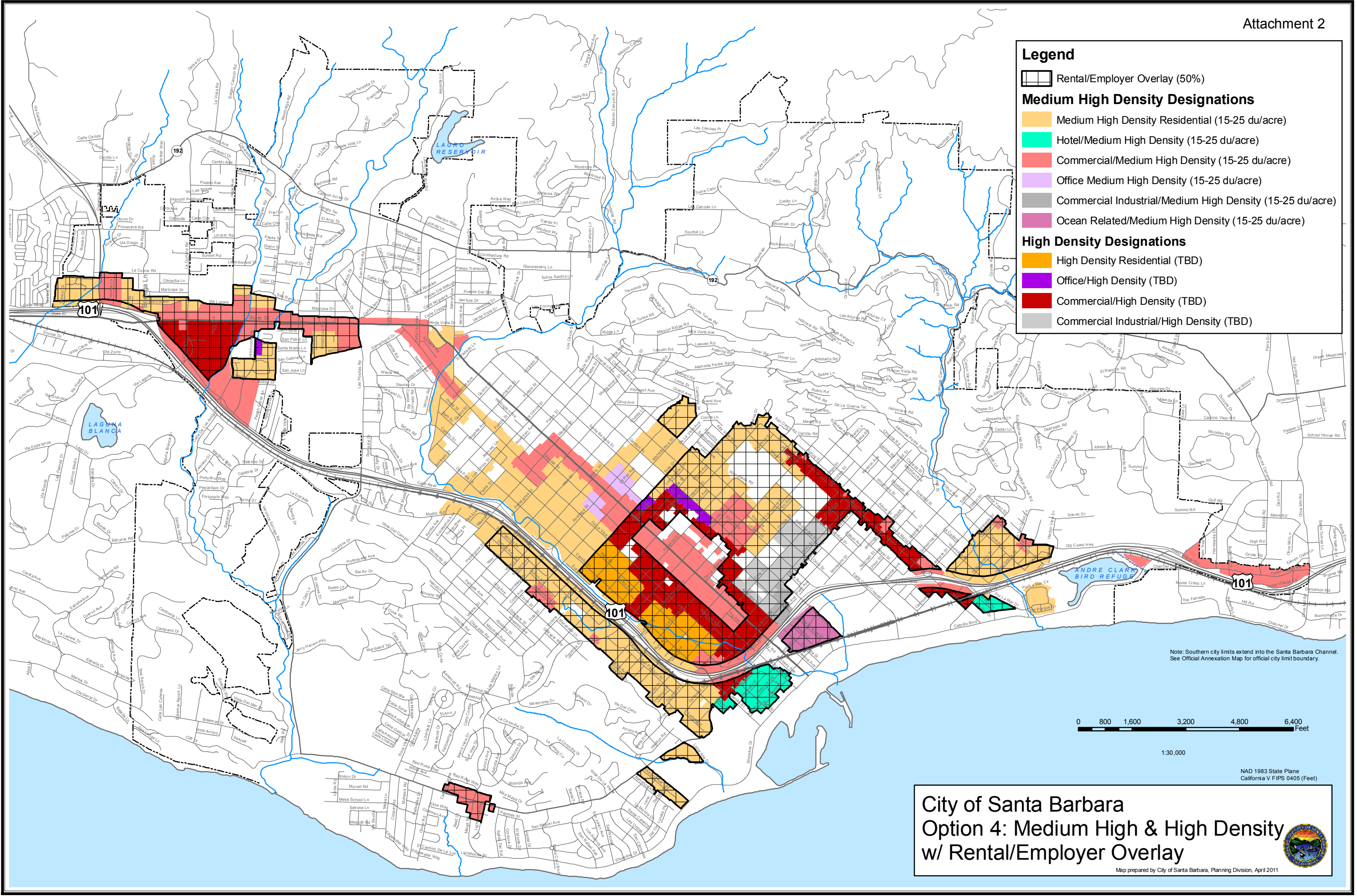
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NAD 1983 State Plane
California V FIPS 0405 (Feet)

City of Santa Barbara
Option 3: Medium High Density w/
Market/Rental Employer Overlay



Map prepared by City of Santa Barbara, Planning Division, April 2011



Legend

Rental/Employer Overlay (50%)

Medium High Density Designations

- Medium High Density Residential (15-25 du/acre)
- Hotel/Medium High Density (15-25 du/acre)
- Commercial/Medium High Density (15-25 du/acre)
- Office Medium High Density (15-25 du/acre)
- Commercial Industrial/Medium High Density (15-25 du/acre)
- Ocean Related/Medium High Density (15-25 du/acre)

High Density Designations

- High Density Residential (TBD)
- Office/High Density (TBD)
- Commercial/High Density (TBD)
- Commercial Industrial/High Density (TBD)

Note: Southern city limits extend into the Santa Barbara Channel. See Official Annexation Map for official city limit boundary.

0 800 1,600 3,200 4,800 6,400 Feet

1:30,000

NAD 1983 State Plane
California V FIPS 0405 (Feet)

City of Santa Barbara
Option 4: Medium High & High Density
w/ Rental/Employer Overlay

Map prepared by City of Santa Barbara, Planning Division, April 2011





**Ad Hoc Subcommittee
Recommendations to Date
April 19, 2011**

Density

- Replace the Variable Density incentive program with the Average Unit Density incentive program.
- Develop a temporary five year land use ordinance incentive with a sunset clause, or decision point by Council to allow higher density projects in specific geographic areas, delineated by an overlay together with a program to assess the effectiveness of the policy.
- Limit the number of higher density projects to 100 units or five years whichever occurs first.

Not a unanimous recommendation: Councilman White recommends a higher number, upwards of 250 units.

- Establish only a Medium High density of 15-25 du/ac allowance for the Average Unit Density Program. Do not establish a High Density designation.

Not a unanimous recommendation: Councilman White recommends both Medium High and High (27-45 du/ac) designations.

- Temporarily allow higher densities in specific geographic areas, under the Average Unit Density (AUD) incentive program, at a 50% increase for market development, and a 100% increase for rental and employer housing.

Not a unanimous recommendation: Councilman White proposes the High density designation (at perhaps a lower density) with a single 50% overlay for rental & employer housing or if that is not supported then another option is that at the end of five years the AUD revert back to the Variable Density incentive program.

- Remove the Brinkerhoff and Bungalow districts from the higher density overlay areas.
- Remove references to Form Based Codes.

- Expand the proposed Floor Area Ratio policy to indicate direction to form a working group to include local professionals from the development community.

Historic Resources Element

- Add a reference to historic preservation in Land Use Element Goals.
- Remove references to Form Based Codes.
- Add an explicit statement to assure protection of City, State and National Landmarks.
- The Historic Landmarks Committee has created a subcommittee to work on the Historic Resources Element. Expand to include members from the preservation community and begin work as soon as possible.
- Remove 6 month Interim Preservation Design Guidelines implementation action.

Circulation & Parking

- General agreement on Circulation goals & policies.
- No agreement on multi-unit residential parking requirements. Councilman Hotchkiss recommends two spaces per unit; Councilman Francisco recommends a market approach; and Councilman White recommends one space per unit for multi-unit projects, not just for mixed-use projects.
- Agreement on removing the parking maximums as a possible implementation action.

Air Quality Highway Setback

- No consensus on air quality highway setback. Councilman Hotchkiss recommends 250'; Councilman Francisco recommends no buffer; and Councilman White needs to further study the issue.

Adaptive Management Program

- General agreement on the policy and implementation actions.